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A
DECLARATION

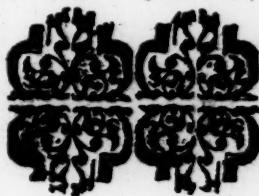
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS

OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

To the whole Kirk and Kingdome
of SCOTLAND,

CONCERNING
Present dangers, and duties relating to
the *Covenant and Religion.*

Church of Scotland -- General assembly -- Commission.



Printed at *Edinburgh* by *Evan Tyler*, Printer
to the Kings most Excellent Majesty :

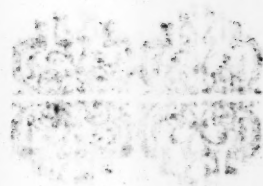
And re-printed at *London* for *Robert Bostock*,
at the Kings Head in *Paul's*
Church-yard. 1648.

A
DECLARATION

OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE
KINGDOM OF SCOTLAND

IN RELATION
TO THE
FUNDING AND THE
THE CHURCH AND RELIGION



Printed at Edinburgh by James Tytler, Printer
to the Kings most Excellent Majesty
And re-printed at London for Robert Dodsley
at the Kings Head in Pall Mall
Church-yard 1648

Edinb. 1 Martii, 1648. Post Meridiem.

A Declaration of the Commissioners of
the General Assembly to the whole Kirk and
Kingdom of *Scotland*, concerning present
dangers, and duties relating to the
COVENANT and RELIGION.

IF in a time of so great and imminent danger to Religion and the Cause of God, the Trumpet in Zion should give no certain sound, nor the watch-mens Tower any seasonable warning, it might be justly charged upon us as a ~~sa~~ful neglect of duty, and the blood of many thousand souls might be required at our hands. Therefore so far as we have discovered the dangerous plots and snares of the malicious and crafty adversaries of this Cause, we shall freely and faithfully make the same known; trusting that all who would not make shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, will carefully avoid as well hid as manifest rocks, when they are warned of them.

After the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Kingdoms had so prospered against the enemies and opposers thereof, as made them despair of overthrowing it in any such way of a direct opposition; they begun with much wit and industry to endeavour a dividing of the ends of the Covenant, and an altering of the first principle and state of the Cause. Upon the one hand, the Sectaries in *England* (accord-
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ing as is formerly represented by the late General Assembly, in their Declaration to their Brethren of *England*, and by our Remonstrance to the Committee of Estates of the 13 of *October* last) have by fraud and violence endeavoured the subversion of Religion; whose exorbitant insolency, being now in Arms, is so unsupportable, that no man can doubt but all the Articles of the Covenant are in danger by them; the vile Errors, wicked Heresies, and intolerable Blasphemies daily growing amongst them, can hardly be reckoned up; all which are mightily aggredged by the lawlesse and Godlesse toleration thereof: And lest Parliamentary authority should curb this monstrous insolency, they have not onely refused Orders for disbanding, but have forced Orders for their own standing, and do over-rule Parliament, King, City, and Country, to the trampling under foot all Government Civil and Ecclesiastical, and to the terrour, oppression, and apparent ruine of all the truly godly, and sound lovers of the Solemn League and Covenant. On the other hand, the Prelatical and Malignant party have catched at and studied to make advantage of some parts and clauses of the Covenant, without keeping all the links of that golden chain fast together.

This designe of receding from the former principles, and stating the publike Cause otherwise then it was stated by both Kingdoms when they joyned in Covenant and Arms, may be abundantly discovered by two instances: First, the designe hath been so fast and so far driven on, that although the fourth Article of the League and Covenant was clearly framed and intended against the Malignant party; and although there was one expresse Article in the Treaty between the Kingdoms for swearing and subscribing the League and Covenant by both Kingdoms, as a more neer tie and conjunction of both, for their defence against the Popish, Prelatical and

and Malignant party and their adherents; And although in the Declarations of both Kingdoms in the year 1643, it was declared that all such as would not speedily take the Covenant, and joyn with all their power in the defence of this Cause, are to be censured and punished as professed *Adversaries* and *Malignants*; Yet some are not ashamed to plead for the Malignant party, as if they were friends rather then enemies to this cause, and as none were now to be looked upon as dangerous enemies to the Cause, but the *Sectaries* onely; whereas the word of God and the experience of former times not onely teacheth us to beware of dangers from the fraud, as well as the force, from the plots as well as from the power of enemies; but also setteth before us sad examples of great unexpected miseries, and mischiefs brought upon the people of God, from enemies once broken and quashed, when they got again the power of the sword, & opportunity to act whatsoever cruelties their inveterate malice and enraged spirits put them upon.

The other instance is, that although in the Covenant, the duty of preserving and defending the Kings Majesties person and authority be joyned with & subbordinate unto the duty of preserving and defending the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdoms; and although from the beginning of this Cause, the good, safety and security of Religion hath been principally sought after and insisted upon: yet solicitations, perswasions, and endeavours have not been, nor are wanting for his Majesties restitution to the exercise of his Royal power, and for espousing his Majesties quarrell, notwithstanding his not granting of the publick desires concerning the Covenant, and Religion: And this course is clearely contrary to the declared resolution of the Parliament of this Kingdom, after advice desired from us, upon the case concerning the King.

King then propounded to us; And it is no lesse contrary to the Principles and professions of the Convention and of the Committee of Estates, before any such advise was desired or had from us: yea all along, and in the whole course of the publick proceedings, the settling and securing of Religion hath been so much stood upon, that Malignants who intended a new state of the cause did well perceive how great difficulty, and how small hopes there was of satisfying this Kirk and Kingdom with any thing else, while unsatisfied in the point of Religion; and therefore all possible care hath been taken by them whereby to have some specious and fair pretences of satisfaction in the businesse of Religion.

And here, as we do not disapprove, but highly commend the worthy pains of such as did indeed endeavour to bring the Kings Majesty a greater length, even to give full satisfaction in point of Religion; so we cannot but take notice of that report which many did lately entertaine and spread in this country, namely, that his Majesty hath given satisfaction to the desires of this Kirk and Kingdome in point of the Covenant and Religion.

If his Majesty had indeed given such satisfaction, we should rejoyce at it as much as any, and however shall not cease to pray for his Majesty, that God would give him repentance and remission of sins, and incline his heart to the love of the true Religion and Reformation, and that his Royal person may be preserved from all harm and violence: And being now (as we formerly remonstrate on the 13, of October) very sensible of the present danger his Majesties person and Monarchicall government is in by that prevalent party of Sectaries; We shall, so far as concerneth the duty of our places and callings, endeavour the preservation of Monarchicall government in his Majesty, and his Posterity according to the Covenant;

nant; not being ignorant what confusion and calamities use to attend the change either of the government it self, or of the Royal line. Neverthelesse, the country being so generally possessed with so dangerous a mistake, misunderstanding of so great a businesse; and his Majestie himself professing in his letter to us, dated at *Garisbrook* Castle the 27 of *December* last, that he hath resolved so far to agree to the desires of this Kirk and Kingdom, concerning the Covenant, and settling Religion, as hee is confident shall give us satisfaction; If now wee should be silent, we might be understood as tacitely consenting and acquiescing: Wee are therefore necessitated for undeceiving the Nation, and for acquitting our selves, to declare, that a Narrative of the state of publick affairs having been made to us by those who were entrusted for that effect, and since delivered to us in writing, Wee have more especially taken to our serious thoughts so much of that Narrative as was from His Majesty made known unto us, as his resolutions for satisfaction in point of Religion. The first Article whereof is as followeth:

1. *For the Covenant, His Majesty giving beleef to the professions of those who have entred into the League and Covenant, and that their intentions are reall for preservation of His Majesties Person, according to their allegiance, and no ways to diminish his just Power and Greatnesse, is content, so soon as he can with freedom, honour and safety be present in a free Parliament, to confirm the said League and Covenant by Act of Parliament in both Kingdoms, for security of all those who have taken, or shall take the said Covenant: Provided that none who is unwilling shall be constrained to take it.*

Which Article heth nothing in it of His Majesties affection to, or liking and approbation of the Covenant, but onely what he is content to yeeld in order to his own interest. Yea, an Act of Parliament for security of those who have taken, or shal take the

the Covenant, doth or may suppose some fault, or somewhat justly challengable in the taking of the Covenant, which needeth an Act of Indemnity. Next, the offer is but conditionall, and hath in the bosom of it a complication of such and so many conditions, as might open a door to some evasion or other, by multiplying exceptions, difficulties, and various notions, either concerning the professions of those who have entred into the League & Covenant, or concerning His Majesties just power and greatnesse, or concerning his freedom, honour and safety, or concerning a free Parliament. And although the concession were certain and absolute, it amounts to no more but to a leaving of the Covenant arbitrary; which is contrary to the Acts of the Generall Assembly and Parliament in this Kingdom, to the Declaration of both Kingdoms before cited, and to one of the chief Propositions of Religion once agreed upon by both Kingdoms, for a safe and wel grounded Peace; *viz.* The Proposition concerning His Majesties swearing and signing of the League and Covenant, and enjoyning by Act of Parliament in both Kingdoms the taking thereof by all the Subjects in the three Kingdoms, with such penalties as shall be agreed upon by both Kingdoms: So that the first Article of His Majesties offer is a most manifest altering of the State of this cause; It is also a strengthening of the hearts and hands both of the Sectaries, and of the Malignant Party, a partaking and conniving at the sin of all those in the three Kingdoms who have refused, or shall refuse to enter into the League & Covenant, an introducing of a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause which so much concerneth the glory God, the good of the Kingdom, and the honour of the King. And therefore wee have judged this Article not onely unsatisfactory, but destructive to the Covenant. Neither are wee moved with that objection which is hinted concerning the constraining or enforcing men consciences:

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They refuse a necessary duty who refuse to take the Covenant; and the penalty or punishment of such refusall is no constraining of the Conscience; more then the penalty or punishment of a Subject who refuseth to take the Oath of Allegiance is a constraining of the conscience to Loyalty; or more then the punishment of Idolaters, Blasphemers, and Seducers, mentioned so often in Scripture, can be called a constraining of the conscience to the fear of God.

The words of the second Article are these:

His Majesty will likewise confirm by Act of Parliament in England, Presbyteriall Government, the Directory for Worship, and Assembly of Divines at Westminster for three years, so that his Majesty and his household be not hindered from using that form of Divine Service he hath formerly practised; and that a free debate and consultation be had with the Divines at Westminster (twenty of his Majesties nomination being added unto them) and with such as shal be sent from the Church of Scotland, whereby it may be determined by his Majesty and the two Houses how the Church Government after the three years shall be fully established according to the Word of God.

For ought we know the conditions couched in the first Article are also to be understood in this and the following Articles: However this second Article as it is but the same in substance with some of his Majesties concessions in former Messages, so that which is proposed in it, is but a Toleration of Presbyterial Government in *England*, and that but for three years, and is a direct allowance, at least of the book of Common-Prayer in his Majesties Household: And moreover by the second Article not only a door is left open for re-establishing Prelacy and the Service Book, But the happy progress already made in the Reformation, and Uniformitie of Religion according to the

Covenant in a Confession of Faith, Directorie of Worship, Form of Church Government and Catechism is set aside as so much lost labour, in order to a future settlement. Free debate with any of the Prelaticall party nominated by his Majestie (when there was any such occasion) hath not been declined: But we have great cause to be tender of unsetling and razing a good foundation already laid in the work of Reformation. And whereas his Majestie will have it determined by himself, and the two Houses, how the Church Government after the said three years shall be established according to the Word of God: This doth at once cut off three of the most materiall and most necessary Propositions concerning Religion formerly agreed upon by both Kingdoms, and from both tendred to his Majestie (though some of them be now laid aside by the two Houses of the Parliament of *England*) namely, The third Proposition, for abolishing Archbishops, Bishops, &c. The fifth Proposition, That Reformation of Religion according to the Covenant be settled by Act of Parliament, in such manner as both houses have agreed, or shall agree upon after consultation had with the Assembly of Divines; And the sixth Proposition, That such unity and uniformitie in Religion according to the Covenant, as after consultation had with the Divines of both Kingdoms, assembled at *westminster*, is, or shall be joyntly agreed by both Houses of the Parliament of *England*, and by the Church and Kingdome of *Scotland*, be confirmed by Acts of Parliament of both Kingdoms respectively. Of which three Propositions, there can be no hopes as to his Majesties consent or concurrence) if the offer now made concerning a determination by his Majestie and the two Houses, be compared with his Majesties claiming of a negative voyce, and with his Message of *Nov. 16.* in which he declared that both in Relation as he

is a Christian, and as a King, he cannot give his consent to the abolishing Archbishops, Bishops, &c. Beleeving that this order was placed in the Church by the Apostles themselves, and that his Majesty is also bound by his Coronation Oath to maintain it. And this message of *November 16.* His Majestie adhereth unto, in his Answer to the Bills and Propositions presented to him at *Carisbrook Castle*; which Answer is dated *December 28.* and so after his Majesties Letter to us. Upon these and the like considerations we have found the said second Article of his Majesties offers in point of Religion to be destructive to Presbyteriall Government, the Directorie of Worship, and the uniformitie intended according to the Covenant.

For the third Article delivered to us in these words, *And for suppressing of Schism and Heresies, his Majestie is content and most willing that an effectual course be taken by Act of Parliament, and all other wayes needfull and expedient for suppressing the opinions and practises of Antitrinitarians, Arrians, Socinians, Antiscripturists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Arminians, Familists, Brownists, Separatists, Independents, Libertines, and Seekers, and generally for suppressing all Blasphemie, Heresie, Schism, and all such scandalous doctrine or practises as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity (whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation) or to the power of Godlineß, or which may be destructive to Order or Government, or to the peace of Church or Kingdome.*

As we do approve of the Suppression of the particular Heresies and Schismes enumerated in his Majesties offer; So we see not how it can be reconciled with his Majesties Message of *November 16.* in which there was a concession to all such as differ from Presbyteriall Government: And do further find the Article dangerous and defective in omitting *Eraastianism*, and other dangerous errors,

especially Popery and Prelacy, which may prove destructive to the Covenant, in ministering the occasion to Papists and Prelates to plead for a toleration, although the Covenant bind us to endeavour the extirpation both of Popery and Prelacy.

Having now discovered the snares and dangers, we shall in the next place most humbly and seriously propose and recommend some wholsom, seasonable and pious counsels to all the Members of this Church and Kingdom, especially to the Honorable and High Court of *Parliament*, and to the Brethren of the Ministry, which may also serve to express our sense concerning the whole matter contained in that narrative, delivered to us in writing, so far as is competent and fit for us to give any judgment thereupon.

First of all we exhort all and every one to make more conscience of endeavouring a reall Reformation of themselves and their Families, and of the places in which they live then ever yet they have done; to be more serious in searching their hearts, considering their ways, and purging themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit to perfect holiness in the fear of God; to oppose wickedness and prophuneness, promote the power and practise of Godliness, and to be deeply humbled before the Lord for neglecting these things so much and so long; with all employing and improving Christs al-sufficiency, and striving to exercise faith in him for the grace of mortification and sanctification, as well as for remission of sins and peace with God; that being implanted and rooted in him, we may grow up as trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified; for without amendment of life, and bringing forth of better fruit, the fierce wrath of the Lord cannot turn away from us.

Secondly, as men desire they may not be led into temptation, but may be guided in safe and right paths, in the
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midst of so great difficulties: Let them avoid the company and counsel of the ungodly, whereby even good men have been oft times most dangerously insnared; Let all that fear God choose the Testimonies of the Lord for their counsellors, be much in prayer, and searching the mind of God in his word without leaning to their own understanding, or consulting with flesh and blood in cases of conscience.

Thirdly, seeing it is no act of wisdom but of folly, so to shun one danger as to run upon another as bad or worse; Let us therefore avoid enemies, and beware of dangers on all hands: We cannot see but the cause of God, the true Religion, the Covenant, Presbyteriall Government, this Church and Kingdom, and whatsoever is dearest to us will be in as great danger, if the Prelatical party prevail; as now they are in by the power and prevalency of Sectaries in *England*, who have made the Covenant and begun Reformation to be laid aside and hindered the promoting thereof. So that there is a necessity to be apprehensive of dangers, and attentive to remedies on both sides, and to beware of compliance with, and connivance at Sectaries upon the one hand, and Malignants upon the other.

Fourthly, when we speak of Malignants, we desire that the distinction may be remembered, which was made in the solemn Warning to the Kingdom from the Generall Assembly in *February 1645*. *Viz.* That the cause is in very great danger from two sorts of Malignant enemies: First, from such as have openly displayed a Bannar, or joyned in Arms and professed Hostility against the cause, and such as adhered thereunto: Secondly, from secret Malignants, Discovenanters, and bosom Enemies. This second sort may be still known by some Characters, given both at that time and before that time; as by their slandering
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or censuring the Covenant of the three Kingdoms and expedition into *England*, in the year 1643, as not necessary for the good of Religion, or safety of this Kingdom, or as tending to the diminution of the Kings just power and greatness, by their confounding of the Kings Power and just Authority, with the pretence and abuse thereof by Commissions, Warrants or Letters procured from his Majesty by the enemies of this cause and Covenant; as if none were faithful and loyal to the King, who oppose such men and their ways; by their spleen, malice and calumnies against such as God hath made eminently instrumental in this cause, and who resolve to be constant to the end in their first Principles; as if such men were the Kings enemies, who are most zealous for the good and safety of Religion; by their commending, justifying or excusing other known Malignants, and by their conversing or intercommuning with excommunicate Delinquents. Unto which Characters time and experience give us occasion to add some others, as namely, their unwillingness and declining to reckon Malignants among the enemies of this cause, from whom danger is to be apprehended; Their disjoyning and dividing the duty of endeavouring the Kings Majesties preservation and restitution, from the duty of preserving, defending, settling and securing Religion: As if we might and ought to pursue the former without the latter, while both are in danger; Their maligning of, and uttering malicious words against faithfull and zealous Ministers, and against this meeting and Judicatory, appointed by the Generall Assembly: Lastly, their crying up or down of parties or persons, and even of the Sectaries themselves according as they have more or less hopes of advantage from them to their own designs. For 'tis not long since such men made light account of any dangers, which were apprehended from the prevalent faction of the

the Sectaries in *England*; There being then some hopes of a compliance and combination between them and the Malignants: which is an infallible demonstration that such mens pretended Zeal against those Sectaries now is not from the right Principle. Wherefore, let all such dangerous persons, as we have here deciphered and described, be carefully observed and avoided, as men would keep themselves pure, and free of snares: And let Presbyteries be diligent to discover, try and censure any of this kind in their bounds, that they may be able herein to give a good account of their diligence; As also, that they be careful to discover, try and censure any trafficking Sectaries, and all such as favour their opinions and ways.

Fifthly, Though we esteem that prevalent Faction of Sectaries, with their abettors and adherents, Presumptuous and Malicious enemies to Religion, King and Government: Yet we hold it is our duty to labour to remove and prevent all occasions of *jealousies and suspicions betwixt the Kingdoms, and do or say nothing that may breed misunderstandings, break off correspondence, weaken the confidence, or infringe the Union and Peace betwixt the two Kingdoms, so happily established in his Majesties presence, and with his Royall consent in both Parliaments*; A caution as necessary now, as when it was given above five years ago in a Warning from the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly, met in this same place, *January* the fourth, 1643. And Generally we desire that all the Articles and clauses of the solemn League and Covenant may be kept inseparably, and inviolably linked together, and that there may be great tenderness and care to avoid every thing which may be interpreted as a contradicting or abandoning of the former Principles, Proceedings, Petitions, Protestations, Remonstrances and Declarations of this Kirk and Kingdom in the pursuance of this cause; and more especially
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to take good heed that *Scotlands* desires, do not mount higher for the King, and fall lower in the point of Religion, then they were at our first undertaking and ingagement in this cause.

Finally, we do most seriously obtest all the people of God in this Nation, and especially the Estates of Parliament, by their love to the cause of God, by their solemn Vows and Covenants, by their first principles and professions, by their former zeal and sincerity, by the many blessings of God, and his great works done for us when our zeal and integritie was greatest in this cause, and by all the curses and judgements of God which his Word denounceth against back sliders and Covenant-breakers, that they may all the dayes of their lives continue firm, stedfast, and faithfull in their Covenant with God, and one with another, and make good their former professions in a time of temptation and difficultie, without waving or falling off to the right hand, or to the left, and as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

A. Ker.



FINIS.

